THE PUBLIC TRUST FOUNDATION

Freedom of Information Statement

The *San Andreas Freedom of Information Act* (**SAFOI Act**) gives members of the public the right to access documents held by public bodies across San Andreas, including local governments, law enforcement, and other government-led agencies.

This statement is provided by the Public Trust Foundation to help inform the public and promote greater transparency in local governance and municipal affairs within Los Santos.

Below is a general list of the types of records that may be requested from local agencies and the City Government. This list is illustrative and not exhaustive:

- Organisation and functions
- Categories of documents
- Freedom of information arrangements
- Publications
- Rules, policies and procedures
- Report literature
- Transcripts

The Public Trust Foundation aims to regularly request records like these and make their information available online to assist the public. Making information easily accessible can reduce the need for members of the public to submit requests under the SAFOI Act.

THE FUNCTION OF THE PUBLIC TRUST FOUNDATION

The Public Trust Foundation (PTF) is an independent, non-profit organization established in Los Santos. It is comprised of local community leaders, writers, legal professionals, and dedicated volunteers with the goal of restoring public trust in local matters and shedding light on issues of concern.

REPORT TOPICS:

This report will examine concerns surrounding **nepotism**, **failures in accountability**, and a persistent **lack of transparency** within public offices, with a focus on how **these issues undermine public trust** and obstruct meaningful oversight.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST AND CITY RESPONSES

This report outlines the records requested under the San Andreas Freedom of Information Act (SAFOI Act), the responses provided by the City, and an assessment of the adequacy and clarity of those responses in light of the Actôs purpose.

1. Small Business Fund (SBF) Applications

Information Requested:
Records reflecting the number of outstanding Small Business Fund grant applications, including internal tallies, tracking documents, or status summaries.

The City's Response:
The City reports fifteen (15) outstanding SBF applications. The City further states that the Small Business Fund is currently under administrative review and is not accepting or approving new applications.

2. Business Development Department – Creation and Authority

Information Requested:
Any executive orders, directives, memoranda, or written statements concerning the creation of the proposed Business Development Department, including its purpose, scope, and leadership structure, as announced by Mayor Bradenburg.

The City's Response:
The City states that any records relating to the departmentôs purpose, scope, or leadership consist of preliminary or internal deliberative communications and are therefore exempt from disclosure. The City confirms that no final executive order or binding administrative action establishing the department has been issued.

3. Planned City Contracts for 2025–2026

Information Requested:
Documentation or official statements outlining anticipated or planned municipal contracts for 2025ï 2026, including construction, sanitation, mining, or other major services.

The City's Response:
The City indicates that any such records would be preliminary or deliberative and are exempt from disclosure. No finalized contracts, executed agreements, or binding commitments for 2025ï 2026 currently exist.

4. Grant and Contract Issuance Criteria

Information Requested:
Policies or procedural documents governing how the City issues grants and contracts, including procurement rules and any proposed changes.

The City's Response:
The City refers to existing procurement and bidding rules that are publicly available. It states that no additional non-public final policies exist, and that any draft or proposed changes are exempt from disclosure.

5. Los Santos High and Davis High – Future Intentions

Information Requested:

Executive orders, proposals, or correspondence regarding plans to reopen, repurpose, permanently close, or otherwise determine the future of Los Santos High and Davis High.

The City's Response:

The City reports that no final executive orders, formal proposals, or binding decisions have been issued regarding either institution. Any internal discussions or draft materials are deemed deliberative and exempt from disclosure.

6. Sacred Hearts Shelter Closure Documentation

Information Requested:

Documentation substantiating claims that Sacred Hearts Shelter was closed and left without staff, including termination notices, budget cut orders, or closure records.

The City's Response:

The City states that any responsive records would consist of internal personnel or operational documents and are exempt from disclosure under FOIA provisions relating to employment and internal administrative matters.

7. Arcani and Related Entities – City Funding or Contracts

Information Requested:

Records indicating whether Arcani or any related entities currently receive, previously received, or are being considered for City funding or contracts.

The City's Response:

The City reports that no records were located indicating any current, past, or prospective contractual relationship, funding, or compensation involving Arcani or related entities.

WRITER'S ASSESSMENT AND COMMENTARY

HANK PRESTON

Founder of The Public Trust Foundation
Former Port Authority Director
Former Mayor of Los Santos
Local Business Owner

Hank Preston is a longtime public advocate, best known as the Director of the Port Authority, and his time serving as Mayor of Los Santos, and his current small business and the Public Trust Foundation.

With decades of experience inside public institutions, blue collar positions and the private sector, Preston has been a consistent advocate for accountability, transparency, and responsible governance. His work has focused on strengthening public agencies, protecting community interests, and ensuring that government remains open and answerable to the people it serves.

WRITER'S ASSESSMENT AND COMMENTARY

NEPOTISM, LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY

While the City's response technically addresses each category of the request, a recurring reliance on broad exemptions, particularly those citing "deliberative," "internal," or "personnel" records, significantly limits the public's ability to understand how major decisions are being shaped and is being used to deliberately censor information, where in many cases a simple, straightforward statement would have been a more appropriate substitute than an outright denial of information the public has a right to know.

In multiple areas, the City confirms that reviews, discussions, or planning processes are underway, yet provide little to no substantive detail that would meaningfully inform residents about intent, direction, or accountability from The Mayor's Office.

This lack of willingness to clarify is especially concerning where long term governance issues are involved, such as the proposed creation of a Business Development Department, future municipal contracting, and the fate of public institutions like LS High and Davis High. While the absence of finalized decisions is noted, no timelines, interim authorities, or guiding frameworks are disclosed, leaving the public aware that decisions are being contemplated but unable to assess how or by whom they are being influenced.

Of additional concern is the issue of potential nepotism and conflicts of interest within City leadership. Arcani Group, a local security and consultancy provider, is partly owned or governed by Sylvester Sawyer, who is married to Deputy Mayor Sade Aliz. Mr. Sawyer has since been appointed to the role of “Special Advisor to the Mayor,” a position which, under prior administrations, has historically been a salaried appointment. At present, no public salary disclosures for this role appear to be available under the Brandenburg Administration for this role or others within The Mayor's Office.

While the City’s response indicates that Arcani does not currently receive City funding and is not under consideration for contracts, the presence of a company owner or board member operating within the Mayor’s Office, particularly one with a direct marital relationship to the Deputy Mayor presents an inherent appearance of impropriety.

Such arrangements raise serious concerns about impartiality, internal influence, and the integrity of future procurement or contracting processes. If Arcani were ever to be considered for grants, funding, or City contracts involving consultancy, investigative, or security services, this relationship could effectively undermine fair competition by discouraging or excluding other qualified firms from applying on equal footing.

Trends of this nature are dangerous to public trust. Even in the absence of confirmed wrongdoing, blurred lines between public authority and private interests erode confidence in governance and invite reasonable concern from the community. Transparency mechanisms lose their value if they do not allow the public to meaningfully evaluate conflicts before they materialize into policy or financial decisions.

For these reasons, lawmakers at both the state level and those currently seeking election to City Council are strongly encouraged by the Public Trust Foundation to consider legislation that explicitly prohibits nepotism in public appointments, strengthens conflict-of-interest disclosures, and tightens eligibility and oversight standards for access to public funds, grants, and contracts.

Clear, enforceable rules are essential to retain confidence that City decisions are made in the public interest, not influenced by proximity, personal relationships, or private gain.

This report was made possible after nearly thirty days of delay in response to a SAFOIA request. Under state law, public agencies have fourteen days to process such requests unless reasonable delays are explained. The City provided no such explanation and only responded after a formal notice of intent to sue was issued.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ARRANGEMENTS

MAKING A FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

A freedom of information (**SAFOI**) request needs to be in writing and must clearly explain the documents sought. It must be accompanied by the application fee (if imposed).

Requests for documents in the possession of local public agencies can be made by:

- **APPLICATION FORM**

CLOSING MESSAGE FROM THE AUTHOR

Restoring public trust in government is a long, nuanced process, one that requires patience, scrutiny, and persistence. At the Public Trust Foundation, our goal is simple: to set the record straight and shine a light on issues that are not always visible to the naked eye.

We encourage everyone to stay engaged, ask questions, and continue holding those in power accountable. Transparency is not just a policy, it is a responsibility, and collectively we can ensure it is upheld if enough attention is drawn to these issues.

REPORT LITERATURE DISCLOSURE

This report has been prepared solely from the perspective of the author, based on personal research, information obtained through Freedom of Information requests, and publicly available knowledge.

All analysis, commentary, and conclusions expressed herein reflect the author's personal views and interpretations. This report is intended for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal, financial, or professional advice. The author assumes no liability for the use or interpretation of its contents.